



Awards spur growth in pueblo businesses

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A Taos Pueblo jeweler will now be able to work indoors, extending her productive time year round. A Santa Clara Pueblo construction company will have the means to find new clients. These are just two of the Native American entrepreneurs benefitting from grants from the 2018 Native American Venture Acceleration Fund (NAVAF).

A record nine Northern New Mexico Native American–owned and –operated businesses have received a total of more than \$50,000 in NAVAF awards. The fund was created by Los Alamos National Laboratory operator Los Alamos National Security, LLC (LANS) and the Regional Development Corporation (RDC) to help the recipients create jobs, increase their revenue base and diversify the area economy.

“These investments create jobs for pueblo-owned businesses and help strengthen the area’s economy,” says Kathy Keith, director of the Lab’s Community Partnerships Office.

To date, more than \$330,000 has been invested in the regional economy through the Native American Venture Acceleration Fund. The investment comes from LANS, and the fund is managed by the Regional Development Corporation, as part of its work assisting Northern New Mexico communities and small businesses with economic development activities, furthering job creation in the region.

This year’s recipients are:

- Cochiti Pueblo Development Corporation, Cochiti Pueblo: to purchase a water metering and billing system for a water conservation program with tiered billing that will save water and increase revenues.
- High Water Mark, LLC, Cochiti Pueblo: to purchase hardware and software that will support the company’s growth as they work on federal contracts.
- Jacqueline Gala Jewelry, Taos Pueblo: to purchase a ventilation exhaust to ensure safety and a buffing machine that can be used indoors, allowing year-round production.
- Jemez Community Development Corporation, Jemez Pueblo: to help with website development and graphic design to raise awareness of the corporation.
- Native Arts Gallery, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo: to implement an inventory control system and purchase a computer/printer to manage costs and increase revenue, with a view to hiring another employee.
- R and M Construction, LLC, Santa Clara Pueblo: to fund development of a marketing strategy and website to improve outreach and grow the business.

- Smoke Signals Peacepipe Production Company, Taos Pueblo: to support an upgrade to the company's workshop, making production more efficient, and to fund website development that enables online ordering.

"Native American entrepreneurs are building new companies and creating new jobs. We're happy the Native American Venture Acceleration Fund can play a role in supporting these successes," said Val Alonzo, executive director of the RDC.

In addition to the financial support, grant recipients will also be provided with technical assistance from the RDC and other organizations.

More information about the Native American Venture Acceleration Fund is available from Vangie Trujillo (vangie@lanl.gov) of Lab's Community Partnerships Office or Val Alonzo (val@rdcnm.org) of the Regional Development Corporation.

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